

# the Roadrunner

Nebraska ♦ Department ♦ of ♦ Roads

December 2006/January 2007



# the Roadrunner

Published every two months by the  
**Nebraska Department of Roads**

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## From the Director

# A New Year with More Challenges



**John L. Craig**

**By John L. Craig**

Director, Nebraska Department of Roads

It's hard to believe that another year has nearly come and gone. Not apparent to everyone is that 2006 is a turning point and future years will present their own unique challenges.

Fiscal Year 2006 (ending June 30, 2006) was perhaps the "high-water mark" for the Department of Roads. This last year, the department produced the largest program in the history of the state, with the fewest employees in 50 years, and the performance was the highest on record.

Now, we are at a crossroad. As we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System this year, Nebraska is experiencing declining revenues (state and federal), increasing inflation (13.1 percent) and increasing needs. The net result for Nebraska is smaller programs and fewer projects for at least the next several years. This situation is also true for cities and counties and the majority of other states. On the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System, a key question that is being asked, but remains unanswered, is "What will be the transportation system for the next 50 years and how will it be paid for?" The current Federal Transportation Act (SAFETEA-LU) signed August 10, 2005, (and two years late), established a National Commission to make recommendations to Congress on both these questions. The states (including Nebraska), cities and counties must also answer these questions.

So, as the department and industry make adjustments to smaller programs and fewer projects, the vast majority of our efforts (and funding) will be directed toward system preservation (maintaining the system that exists today). Relatively speaking, there will be few capital improvements that add capacity (e.g., additional lanes, interchanges, etc.).

As a result, our challenge will be to maintain and improve our performance relative to our mission. This will be difficult and it may not be possible in all areas, but, if any team can do it, it is the Department of Roads and our industry. We are a great team.

The currency of the future is trust and this is built on solid performance. Each of us, and our partners, are ambassadors and representatives for our industry; we must all remain cognizant that our individual and collective performance and behavior adds or detracts from that public trust and credibility. Remember that the quickest way to lose good performance and behavior, is to ignore it. The corollary, the quickest way to get good performance and behavior, is to recognize it. It is all about people! Continue to use our Recognition Program to recognize that excellence.

This has been another great year. We produced the update of the State's Long Range Transportation Plan; produced and implemented the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan; reduced work zone crashes; reduced employee accidents and "lost work" days; advanced project management; advanced accelerated construction, improved document data and application management; advanced more robust training; studied our needs criteria; and improved program financial management. Relative to our mission, we have improved our performance in safety, mobility and environmental stewardship to the highest on record.

In spite of the many challenges we face, the future will be what we make it. I expect 2007 to be another great year. Be proud of who you are and the results you have achieved.

Thank you for your service. I am proud of you. Best wishes to you and your families for a safe and Happy Holiday and New Year. ♦

# “Mega” Construction Projects Completed in Districts 7 and 8

The Department of Roads tried a new approach for asphalt projects this past construction season. This approach created what is called a “mega” project.

The mega project combines several planned asphalt projects into one large project. By combining several projects the Department of Roads can save both time and money.

The two mega projects completed this year were in Districts 7 and 8. The District 7 project was on U.S. Highway 6, from Holbrook to Holdrege, a distance of 36.2 miles. The District 8 project was on U.S. Highway 20, from three miles west of Newport to O'Neill, for about 40.8 miles. Work on Highway 20 began in January and work on Highway 6 began in late February. Both projects covered five normal projects and were completed in October.

Work on Highway 20 included milling, asphalt surfacing and shoulder work. Work on Highway 6 included asphalt surfacing, bridge work, replacing several bridges with box culverts, extending several box culverts, and remodeling several bridge rails. Werner Construction Co., of Hastings, was the general contractor on both projects and was assisted by various subcontractors.

Both mega projects were well received by the motoring public. Traffic did experience a few delays in District 7, according to District Construction Engineer Hugh Holak. Larry Rau, Project Manager for District 8, said that traffic got around well, but some large farm equipment had problems negotiating barrels at several locations on Highway 20. The cost for the work in District 7 was \$25 million, and cost for the work in District 8 was \$10,490,764.

Holak noted that the asphalt plant in use for District 7 produced 370,000 tons of asphalt for the mega project, plus several other projects in the district. Holak said that having one prime contractor helped reduce or eliminate logistical problems. Rau noted that the mega project proceeded like many asphalt projects, but just took longer.

The District 7 project managers were: Kelly Doyle, Holbrook to Holdrege; Duane Collins, Cambridge to Holbrook; Tim Sell, in Holdrege; and Kent Kuhn, US-6 to Oxford. District 7 inspectors were: Curt Van Pelt, Howard Dold, Wayne Will, Marty Lashley, Dennis Jauken, George



*Photo by Larry Rau, District 8*

**A car travels eastbound along U.S. Highway 20, one mile west of Emmet in District 8. Work on US-20 was part of two “mega” projects completed this year.**



*Photo by Hugh Holak, District 7*

**This segment of U.S. Highway 6 in Arapaho was part of a roadway asphalt “mega” project that covered more than 36 miles in District 7, from Holbrook to Holdrege, and was completed in October.**

McNeil and Doug Macke. The project was designed by Roger Grant.

Larry Rau was the project manager for the District 8 project. His inspectors were: Jim Scholtes, Dan Zwiebel, Stan McNabb and Jason Lehn. Rod Harmon, Shad Thompson and Mel Ohri, from the O'Neill office, assisted with the project. Surveying was done by Dewey Pongratz, Kathy Clyde and Bill Timmerman, from O'Neill, and Rick Irwin and Pam Schmitz, from Ainsworth. Design work on the project was done by Kipp Haight. ♦



# NDOR Employee's Rescues Reap Rewards

*Wanted: Compassionate, committed, tenacious and tireless individual. Must have abundant amounts of knowledge, patience, understanding and self-discipline, as well as the willingness to provide the training and guidance needed to achieve one of life's most rewarding and fulfilling endeavors. Only those who have physical stamina, mental toughness and a stout heart need apply. Oh, and one more requirement: Must love dogs.*

Welcome to the challenging world of training dogs for search and rescue. Kitty Shaner, who works full-time at NDOR as a Highway Construction Technician IV Supervisor/Survey Coordinator at District 6 in North Platte, has been involved in her spare time training dogs and responding to rescue calls for the past nine years. She and her Bloodhounds, Chloe, 9, Penelope, 3, and yellow Labrador Retriever, Anna, 6, have been working together as a team.

Shaner said she became interested in training dogs after she met a man in Mississippi who lived close to a prison that often had escapees. If a prisoner decided to make a run for it, the man would call the police and then he would trail the escapee with his trained four-month-old Bloodhound. Shaner was amazed at how, even at a very young age, these dogs could trail anyone.

*"Training dogs for this type of work is more fulfilling to me than words can say. I am a much more compassionate person and am understanding of why people do the things they do."*

**- Kitty Shaner  
NDOR District 6, North Platte**

According to Shaner, there are several different ways to train dogs to meet the desired result. A tracking dog is trained to smell each footprint the person took. This is a very

meticulous method where the dog is following the person the entire time.

The trailing dog smells the ground as well as the wind. They smell the scent that comes off of a person as they're running, as well as the smell their adrenaline emits, which is just basically a stronger individual scent for that person. Shaner noted that the trailing method of training is one of the best for the overall search because the dog can smell anything the person touched and trail them, and while the dog is trailing, he will scent the ground and the wind continuously.

With this technique, the dog may skip over a lot of ground just by smelling the person in the air and heading directly for the person.

Another method is the disturbed-ground trained dog, which goes after the freshest disturbed-ground scent, not necessarily the actual person they are chasing or trying to locate. Many State Patrol dogs are trained this way.

Shaner explained that she has both Bloodhounds and a yellow Labrador Retriever because of their different



*Photo by Mark Shaner*

**Kitty Shaner takes her yellow Labrador Retriever, Anna, out for a walk. Shaner has three dogs that are trained for search-and-rescue operations.**

ways of tracking. While a Bloodhound has the strongest nose of any other dog and can smell a trail as old as three months ago, a "Lab" has more of a "hot nose," and is able to pick up more of the newer smells, since he can't smell all of the things a Bloodhound does. In some cases a "Lab" can find the freshest trail and get the job done quicker than a Bloodhound.

## Training Process

The process for training these dogs is ongoing, with weekly sessions even after the dogs are fully trained. Shaner said she began training each of her dogs when they were about four weeks old. During this time, she let them become acquainted with cadaver smells. After the dogs turned eight weeks old, she started walking them out in the pasture away from her

house and then let them trail back to the house. Later, she asked someone to hide and gave the dog a scent of the person. The person peeked out from their hiding place so the dog could see them and then they called the dog. The dog got excited and ran to the person, who praised the dog. Shaner did this about three times, going farther each time. Then she repeated the steps, this time making sure the dog couldn't see the person walk away and the person remained hidden. The dog depended on his nose rather than sight to find the person.

For cadaver training, Shaner soaks a tennis ball with the scent and then throws the ball out in a field, having the dog go out and find it. She even hides the ball on a live trail, so when the dog is looking for a person, he will find the cadaver on the way, which actually occurs in some real life instances.

For someone who is considering training dogs, Shaner said it is important to be physically fit. It also helps to do some research about behaviors of different groups of people, such as someone who is stressed or sick, a child, a suspect in a crime, a person with Alzheimer's disease or someone planning to commit suicide. Also, a good, basic understanding of dogs and what motivates them is helpful.

Shaner said the rewards are worth the commitment of time, money and effort required to train these dogs.

"Training dogs for this type of work is more fulfilling to me than words can say. I am a much more compassionate person and am understanding of why people do the things they do. The dogs have made me a better person by just being with me, watching their antics, and taking care of them day in and day out."

Shaner has been able to watch the steady progress her dogs make each day with each different training scenario. It is a major milestone when she can trust them enough to put their names on the list to go out and find someone and then to have every confidence in their training and



*Photo by Mark Shaner*

**Kitty Shaner spends time with one of her two Bloodhounds, Chloe. Shaner has been training dogs and responding to rescue calls for the past nine years.**

abilities to get the job done.

According to Shaner, one of her prouder moments was when her Bloodhound picked a suspect out of a police lineup by scenting a spent gun shell casing. She said she often attends seminars conducted by search and rescue teams, attended by other S&R teams and law enforcement agencies, including police, sheriff, State Patrol and FBI. During some of these seminars, they have blown up cars and found fragments of the bomb, which still contained the scent of the person who made it. If this person also planted the bomb, they have even found a suspect.

### **Success Story**

Shaner said she has found only two people alive during her many years working with dogs. One of these rescues occurred recently, when she was called at 6:00 a.m. one morning to find a woman who had gotten into a fight with her husband at 10:30 the night before while driving in their vehicle out in the country. She got out of the vehicle, and her husband took off. When he came back to pick her up three minutes later, he said he

couldn't find her. Shaner said that when she arrived on the scene, there were approximately 30 deputies and investigators from two counties who were certain her husband had killed her in a nearby canal.

Shaner started the search with her dogs, and it led away from the canal. They went about five miles away from the starting point and were in and out of fields where the woman had walked. They were headed east when they received a call that the woman had been found farther east at a farmhouse where she was staying. The dogs were headed toward her when she was found. Shaner observed that most searches are similar to this—a combined effort of using dogs and law enforcement to find the person.

While most of her calls are for locating people who are already dead, Shaner noted that even after a successful search with a sad ending, families have answers and can finally look forward to the future rather than being stuck in the past.

"I feel that either way, all of my years of training have helped someone, which is very rewarding." ♦



# State Road Crews Ready for Winter Weather's Wallop

The Nebraska Department of Roads' snow removal crews are prepared for their annual challenges with snow and ice, and they will be out in full force when winter weather strikes.

The department continues to combine traditional and high-tech tools to handle winter's blast.

Again this year, Nebraska's statewide 511-telephone system is available to provide 24-hour-a-day, year-round traveler information. By dialing 511 on their cellular telephone or landline telephone, motorists will be able to access the quickest, most up-to-date information about weather conditions, road conditions as reported and travel advisories.

Automatic speech recognition (ASP) offers callers the option of using their voice or keypad to make selections while using 511. Callers outside of Nebraska may dial 800-906-9069. The 511 system is also available on the Internet at [www.nebraskatransportation.org](http://www.nebraskatransportation.org) or [www.safetravelusa.com](http://www.safetravelusa.com).

Nebraska's 511 system provides information for Nebraska and South Dakota highways. Phone numbers are provided for accessing Wyoming, Colorado and Iowa traveler information.

The department plans continued use of liquid chemical processes for frost, ice and snow control on roadways. Maintenance crews will use several liquid chemicals on the roadways, including salt brine and agricultural-based products mixed with magnesium chloride. These products aid in the prevention of snow and ice from bonding to the pavement surface, or they may be applied as de-icing materials to help remove ice and snow buildup on the roadway.

## New De-Icing System

According to Roger Klasna, Highway Operations and Maintenance Manager for District 6 (North Platte area), a new de-icing system was placed on the I-80 bridge just east of North Platte, at mile marker 181.8. The state-of-the-art anti-icing system, complete with computer sensors, will detect when the bridge is becoming icy and will distribute a chemical to de-ice the bridge. Changeable message signs



are operational along Interstate 80 from Kimball to Omaha and on other highways throughout Nebraska, alerting motorists of immediate and/or upcoming closures.

Dynamic message signs (DMS) are located along the Interstate 80 corridor throughout Nebraska to assist motorists. The electronic message signs are constructed over the Interstate and notify drivers of construction, lane and road closures, accidents and inclement weather directives. Signs are also part of the Amber Alert system.

Real-time weather and road information is available on the Roads Department website, [www.nebraskatransportation.org](http://www.nebraskatransportation.org) by clicking on the heading "511-Current Travel." Various weather links are also available on the website by clicking on the heading "Basic Travel Info."

## Follow Basic Rules

Travelers are reminded to follow basic rules of the road for winter driving conditions, including making sure their vehicle is tuned up, traveling at reduced speeds, leaving extra space between vehicles, not using cruise control in any questionable weather and always buckling up. Motorists are also reminded to stay at least 100 feet behind snowplows and to allow plenty of room when passing. ♦



- ❄ **Use your cell phone responsibly. Don't dial and drive. Find a safe place to stop.**
- ❄ **Stay 100 feet behind snowplows.**
- ❄ **Turn off cruise control!**
- ❄ **If snow is blowing, should you be going?**



*Photo by Arvid Olson*

**NDOR Director John Craig visits informally with some of the attendees at the Annual Employee Recognition Ceremony held on October 4 in Grand Island.**

# NDOR Employee Recognition Ceremony Reflects New Program

**By Cindy DeCoster**  
Employee Recognition Program Manager

The Annual Employee Recognition Ceremony was held at the Grand Island I-80 Holiday Inn on October 4. Employees recognized at the ceremony were selected from the new Employee Recognition Program, established in October 2005. The focus of the new employee recognition program is on the honoree, rather than the recognition item. This focus was reaffirmed at the ceremony by changing the format to reflect a more informal, personalized ceremony.

Speakers representing each team being honored had the opportunity to "bring to life" the reasons for which they were recognized. Each team had its own personality and it was reflected in the information that was shared, whether it was humorous or insightful.

The NDOR Dive Team received the "Collaboration" recognition. Members of the team included Osvalds Bumanis, Adam Sleeper, Kristi Van Ooyen, Larry Philbrick, Pat Boyle, Mike Stoltenberg, Jeff Walter, Jay Brinkmeyer, Tom Goodbarn and Mike Lobush.

The "Project of Merit" was represented by the team that delivered the

District 3 Railroad Crossing Project, located north of Norfolk on US-81, within three weeks. The planning of the Rail and Public Transportation Division, along with the prompt response of the District 3 Maintenance crews, resulted in quick completion. Rail members included Richard Bennett, Kristi Van Ooyen and Bev Vonasek. District 3 Maintenance crews included Tim Urwiler, Roger Haahr, Dave Koch, Norm Anderson, Richard Soden, Clayton Hartman, Ken Neuhalten, Dan Vanderheiden and Rod Cook.

Honorees for "Leadership" recognition were Alvin Sand, Richard Bennett and members of the Initiative 2005 Team: Jacki Allensworth, Ryan Christensen, Cindy DeCoster, Angela Dibbert, Clay Duncan, Moe Jamshidi, Jim Knott, Sue Larson, John Stahl, Kendall Tonjes, Ray Trujillo, Kurt Vosburg and Kris Winter.

"Good Samaritan" honorees from District 3 in Humphrey, District 8 in Atkinson and District 8 in Ainsworth were recognized for their actions in the November 2005 snowstorms. Humphrey Maintenance crew

members included Arnold Bickley, Paul Hilmer, Gary Luetkenhaus, Larry Theilen and Terry Wemhoff. Atkinson Maintenance crew members included Chad Deseive and Larry Ogden. Ainsworth Maintenance crew members included J.D. Hoover, Stan McKimmey, Dustin Brown and Justin Ludemann.

**Snow Rodeo** winners, John Fangmeier and Jim Higel, first place; Buddy Darnell and John Saxton, second place; as well as the first place winner of the Loader Competition, Tim Buechler, also attended.

Tom Schulte, featured speaker, entertained and educated the attendees about "Staying Positive in a Tough Work Environment." Most of Tom's career was spent working for a Fortune 500 manufacturing facility in Omaha, where he served in many capacities, including management, training, and business development. Tom currently works as a private consultant helping businesses "reawaken" their leadership.

A big thanks to all the people involved with making this year's ceremony a huge success. ♦

# “+” Marks the Spot

**By Gene Thomsen**  
Deputy State Surveyor

You wouldn't think searching for a Nebraska survey marker would take you to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, but that is exactly what happened to me and Kurt Svoboda, NDOR Highway Right-of-Way Project Manager. On July 29, 2006, we were part of a team of six surveyors and a geologist who would try to locate the southwest corner of the original Nebraska Territory.

The idea of searching for this point had crossed my mind about 15 years ago. As recently as two years ago, Kurt and I had studied maps of the area and talked about hunting for the survey mark. When Jerry Penry, a surveyor for Lancaster County, talked to me last spring about looking for this point, we were ready to get started.

I knew that, in 1859, two surveyors were given a survey contract to extend the Base Line between the Nebraska and Kansas Territory to the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The surveyors, in 1859, chiseled a “+” on a mountain to mark the terminus of this Base Line on the 40th degree of latitude. A few years ago, looking for a “+” on a mountain was like looking for a needle in a haystack. But today, using the Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, the project looked doable.

## Nebraska Territory

When Nebraska became a territory in 1854, its southern border, which it shares with Kansas, was identified as the 40th degree of latitude. This line started at the middle of the Missouri River (southeast of Rulo, Nebr.) and terminated at the summit of the Rocky Mountains, about 20 miles west of Boulder, Colo. All the land lying north of this line to the Canadian border was identified as the Nebraska Territory. At that time Nebraska had mountains, Black Hills and part of the present-day Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Just think, if Nebraska still had these same boundaries, some Department of Roads employees

would have to work around Old Faithful or Mount Rushmore!

This was all about to change when gold was discovered in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in 1858. By 1859, thousands of people were headed to the western reaches of the Nebraska and Kansas Territories to seek their fortunes. This “gold rush” prompted the survey of the extension of the Base Line and the establishment of the “+” at the summit.

## Mound of Stone

The original survey notes from September 10, 1859, stated, “The summit at the point of intersection is a towering granite rock reached with difficulty presenting a top so acute that a man cannot stand on it, nor does it exceed one inch in width, consequently, no monument could be erected. As a substitute we cut a (+) cross at the point of intersection... We also erected a mound of rock or stone 6-feet square at the base and 5-feet high in a platform or niche in the rock. The mound bears South  $37\frac{1}{2}$  degrees East 15 links (9.9 feet) to the ‘+.’”

After studying these notes, we decided our best bet would be to look for the mound of stone 6-feet square, then measure the distance of 9.9 feet to the “+.” The field notes also revealed that the original surveyors may have stopped short of the summit, being on a higher ridge just to the east of the Continental Divide. The surveyors from Colorado—Doyle Abrahamson and Geoffrey Stephenson—had found section corners on the baseline 3 miles west and 9 miles east of the summit.

Using GPS and mathematical computations, we figured we would be within a 300-foot area of the “+.” We knew we would have to find a



Photo by Jerry Penry

Gene Thomsen points to the two-inch cross that marks the Nebraska survey marker at the summit of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

mound of stones on a mountain made up of thousands of stones. The original 1859 survey notes mentioned that there was overhanging mist or clouds, with snow 25-feet deep in some of the gorges near the summit. At this point we had a million questions and only a few answers.

## Steep Terrain

Jerry Penry talked with the Colorado surveyors and thought a reconnaissance of the area would be in order to see what we were getting into. By studying the topography maps we knew the “+” was over 12,000 feet high and in some very steep terrain. We also knew that it was still snowing in May, and it would take most of the summer to melt the majority of the snow. Another potential problem: We were going to be above the tree line with no place to take shelter if bad weather moved in. The topography map showed that the hike would be about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles as the crow flies, but in reality it would be about 4 miles each way.

We came to the conclusion that we might have to make additional attempts with so many unknowns. Mr. Abrahamson had made numerous trips to the area and at least two attempts to find some type of route to get us flatlanders close to the destination. It was decided that we



would start the expedition Saturday, July 29, from the "Fourth of July" trailhead which hikers use to journey on the Arapaho Pass Trail to North and South Arapaho Park.

Everyone met Friday night a few miles from the trailhead near Eldora, Colo., and we camped out at 10,000 feet. We got up early Saturday, loaded up our backpacks and left the trailhead at 4:20 a.m. We had to use a flashlight, but at least we had a trail for the first hour. We were above the tree line when the sun started to make its appearance. We crossed small streams, snow fields and, of course, countless rocks of all sizes.

At 11,000 feet we came upon a crystal-clear lake that was fed by the melting snow. On the west end of this unnamed lake, lay the wreckage of an airplane. It was later learned that this plane had crashed on December 14, 1971, and the 29-year-old pilot had perished in the accident.

We were now at the bottom of a 50-plus degree vertical rock field that rose to over 12,000 feet, which we would have to ascend. We had to climb a little, rest a little, and then repeat the process all over again, until we made it to the top. It had taken us an hour to traverse this last segment and it was now 10:00 a.m., the sun was shining, the sky was blue and everyone had made it to the summit.

When I made it to the top, at 12,450 feet, the stone mound was not as obvious as one would think because of all the rocks in the area. I could tell the stone mound was not in a natural state and had been piled there by someone. The next thing I noticed was what appeared to be the letter "A" that someone had carved on a rock close to the mound. I wondered who would take the time to carve their initials in a granite rock and why here at this location? Referring to the original field notes, I could see the approximate location where the "+" would have been set on a rock that was about 3-feet wide and 9.9 feet from the witness mound.

After a short search for the "+," Mr. Stephenson placed a survey grade GPS unit in the mound of stones to determine its coordinates in case we

had to reestablish the survey mark. After about an hour, I got my chance to obtain a wire brush and started to scrape away 147 years of lichen from a spot on the rock.

### Marker Revealed

Brushing as hard as I could, a small vertical line started to appear. Making a few brush strokes to the left and right revealed a horizontal line that intersected the other line. After a little work with a Swiss Army knife to pick away some of the more stubborn particles, a 2-inch "+" that was set in 1859 and marked the southwest corner of the Nebraska Territory was staring me in the face.

We then moved the GPS unit from the witness mound to the "+," but the rock was so pointed we had to use duct tape to secure the antenna to the stone. By positioning the antenna over the "+" we could obtain a true latitude and longitude on our recent discovery.

We focused our attention on the letter "A" that was carved in the rock 8.3 feet from the "+." My first thought was why would anybody take the time to chisel out a letter in rock, but most of all, why here in this remote location? After using the wire brush to scrape away more lichen, the letter "C"

appeared next to a third letter, which was a "B." These initials were also covered with about the same amount of lichen as the "+," so we figured they were both about the same age. In the original surveyor's field notes, the surveyor is required to list the names of the people who assisted in measuring and marking the survey. The second name on the 1859 list was Albert C. Bringhurst. This was a good indication that those initials were made by the man that made the "+."

We also found a square-cut wooden stake which was wedged in the rocks and appeared very old. Could this have been an old flag that was referred to in the field notes that the surveyors used to establish a line? To commemorate the discoveries of the day, everyone in the group placed a few loose stones on the top of the witness mound.

After about three hours at the top, we proceeded down and reached the trailhead at 6:30 p.m. It was a long day, but our objectives were met and everyone was safe but sore. In reflecting back on what had transpired during the day, I guess a couple of Department of Roads guys can find a needle in a haystack. ♦



*Photo by Pete Modreski*  
Pictured, / to r, Gene Thomsen of Lincoln, Jerry Penry of Milford, and Kurt Svoboda of Lincoln, were members of the seven-man team who hiked to the summit of the Rocky Mountains to find the 1859 mark of the southwest corner of the Nebraska Territory.

# NDOR Highway Improvement Projects Currently Under Contract

As of 11/14/06

**Location**  
**Work Description**  
**Prime Contractor**  
**Project Manager**  
**Contract Bid Amount**

## Key:

Aggregate - Agg  
Bituminous - Bit  
Bridge - Br  
Building - Bldg  
Concrete Pavement - ConPav  
Culverts - Culv  
Electrical - Elec  
Grading - Gr  
Guardrail - Gdrl  
Mechanically Stabilized Earth - MSE  
Seeding - Seed

## District 1

Cook Southwest  
Gr, Culv  
TCW Construction, Inc.  
Lane, Chris (402)483-5466  
\$200,268.63

Adams Northwest  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
L. J. Webb Contractor, Inc.  
Lane, Chris (402)483-5466  
\$464,149.48

Dorchester Southeast  
Gr, Culv, Br, Gdrl  
L. J. Webb Contractor, Inc.  
Vanroekel, Kirk (402)483-5466  
\$404,470.87

Waverly North  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl  
Elk Horn Construction Co.  
Dearmont, Virgil (402)441-7681  
\$811,844.63

Table Rock North  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
The Diamond Engineering Co.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$838,535.80

Lincoln Surveyors Building  
Lincoln Surveyors Building  
Rogge General Contractors, Inc.  
Wood, Glenda (402)479-4498  
\$658,029.00

Diller North  
Bit  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Endorf, Dennis (402)729-3489  
\$1,598,321.22

Dorchester South  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Constructors, Inc.  
Vandegrift, Allen (402)729-3489  
\$2,999,076.23

In Syracuse  
Bit  
Pavers Companies  
Hitzeman, Don (402)335-4131  
\$299,497.01

Lorton East  
Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Constructors, Inc.  
Hitzeman, Don (402)335-4131  
\$1,635,544.66

Platte River Bridges  
Gr, MSE Wall, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Sign, Elec  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Knutson, Dewaine (402)471-0850  
\$45,189,781.90

Beatrice East  
Gdrl, Seed, Bit  
Constructors, Inc.  
Cary, Bill (402)335-4131  
\$2,623,249.93

Tecumseh South  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Habegger, Michael (402)335-4131  
\$3,596,981.22

Table Rock West  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Elec, Bit  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Habegger, Michael (402)335-4131  
\$2,641,879.16

Sterling East  
Gr, Bit  
Pavers Companies  
Habegger, Michael (402)335-4131  
\$119,646.52

US-77 South Interchange to I-180,  
Lincoln  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
England, Jim (402)471-0850  
\$28,886,121.30

Church Road Bridge  
Gr, MSE Wall, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
MCC, LLC  
Preble, Rodger (402)471-0850  
\$2,488,052.17

Ashland South  
Bridge  
Herbst Construction, Inc.  
Preble, Rodger (402)471-0850  
\$109,557.50

K & L Interchange  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Traudt, Bob (402)471-0850  
\$10,119,343.74

US-77, K & L Excess Borrow  
Gr  
LeGrande Excavating, Inc.  
Traudt, Bob (402)471-0850  
\$275,811.82

Warlick Interchange Grading  
Gr  
Land Construction, Inc.  
Traudt, Bob (402)471-0850  
\$854,205.40

Lincoln West  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Elec  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Hobelman, Ryan (402)471-0850  
\$12,430,182.09

Davey Spur  
Bit  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Kuehn, Joseph (402)471-0850  
\$173,364.54

Waverly (EB) Viaduct  
Bit  
Pavers Companies  
Kuehn, Joseph (402)471-0850  
\$168,649.72

## District 2

Platte River East  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Elec  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Brown, Darin G (402)727-3292  
\$8,790,130.15

N-36/Reichmuth Rd.  
Elec  
Commonwealth Electric Co.  
of the Midwest  
Brown, Darin G. (402)727-3292  
\$34,519.07

Fremont East Bypass  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Veverka, Frank (402)727-3292  
\$26,555,563.32

I-480 WB/US-75 NB Bridge  
Over Burt, Omaha  
Gr, MSE Wall, ConPav, Culv,  
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Baehr, Dennis (402)595-2534  
\$17,399,999.32

Gretna - Q St.  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Elec  
Chas. Vrana & Son Constr. Co.  
Farivari, Mo (402)595-2534  
\$12,569,244.55

Blondo St. Noise Wall, Omaha  
Specialty  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Wilson, Bill (402)595-2534  
\$702,718.23

In Elkhorn  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Elec  
Chas. Vrana & Son Constr. Co.  
Trujillo, Ray (402)727-3292  
\$5,327,891.36

174th St. - 198th St., Omaha  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Chas. Vrana & Son Constr. Co.  
Khalaf, Zahi (402)595-2534  
\$15,703,247.66

Springfield North  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br, Elec  
Cedar Valley Corp. & Subsidiaries  
Khalaf, Zahi (402)595-2534  
\$10,491,763.71

72nd St., N-36 to I-680, Omaha  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Gdrl, Fence Elec  
Chas. Vrana & Son Constr. Co.  
Weander, Marty (402)595-2534  
\$5,273,885.67

Add 4th Lane I-680 SB,  
Pacific - West Center  
Gr, MSE Wall, ConPav,  
Culv, Elec, Sign  
Chas. Vrana & Son Constr. Co.  
Fisher, Rick (402)595-2534  
\$948,711.95

N-370 to Ruff Rd.  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Fisher, Rick (402)595-2534  
\$39,143,149.79

Pflug Rd. Bridge  
Gr, MSE Wall, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Fence  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Fisher, Rick (402)595-2534  
\$3,172,179.51

Hooper East & West  
Gr, ConPave, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Elec, Sign  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Jacobs, Micky (402)727-3292  
\$22,401,622.91

D-2 Operations Center, ITS  
Equip./Bldg. Finishes  
Bldg  
Prairie Construction Co.  
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534  
\$609,826.00

Camera Installation, Dist. 1 & 2  
Elec  
Watts Electric Co.  
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534  
\$548,217.20

I-80/Harrison St.,  
Roadway Sensor Test Bed  
Elec  
Commonwealth Electric Co.  
of the Midwest  
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534  
\$152,257.50

Omaha Vehicle Storage Facility  
Omaha Vehicle Storage Facility  
Judds Bros. Construction Co.  
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534  
\$619,450.00

Districts Operations Center  
Districts Operations Center  
Prairie Construction Company  
Kuehner, Chris (402)595-2534  
\$1,523,000.00

West Dodge Road (WB)  
Expressway Bridge 108th - 120th  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br,  
Spec, Elec, Sign  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Zelensky, Rich (402)595-2534  
\$62,989,885.92

WB Bridges Over 108th St., Omaha  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Elec, Sign  
Hawkins Construction Co.  
Zelensky, Rich (402)595-2534  
\$8,432,214.45

## District 3

Beemer Southwest  
Gr, Culv, Br, Gdrl  
Herbst Construction, Inc.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$548,688.10



Schuyler Northeast  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
Herbst Construction, Inc.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$580,259.83

Schuyler Northwest  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl  
A. M. Cohron & Son, Inc.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$739,842.18

Jct. N-84 to West Jct. N-12  
Bit  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Francis, Jeff (402)375-7071  
\$1,067,411.43

Norfolk West  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Elec  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Davis, Rob (402)370-3474  
\$20,299,017.48

Jackson East  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Elec  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Becker, Roger (402)254-6552  
\$4,590,436.36

Dakota Ave. Interchange  
Br  
Christensen Bros., Inc.  
Becker, Roger (402)254-6552  
\$88,289.40

Stanton Southwest  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
A. M. Cohron & Son, Inc.  
Anderson, David (402)564-5751  
\$279,752.71

Stanton Southwest  
Culv  
TCW Construction, Inc.  
Anderson, David (402)564-5751  
\$110,177.46

Albion Equipment Storage Facility  
Albion Equipment Storage Facility  
J. H. Hesse Company, Inc.  
Trosper, Steven (402)564-5751  
\$286,643.00

In Wayne  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Elec  
A & R Construction Co.  
Brummond, Scott (402)375-7071  
\$2,426,281.58

Wayne North  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Fence, Elec  
A & R Construction Co.  
Brummond, Scott (402)375-7071  
\$1,658,440.65

Fordyce West  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl  
Elk Horn Construction Co.  
Wiebelhaus, Bob (402)254-6552  
\$382,725.92

Wausa North  
Bit  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Wiebelhaus, Bob (402)254-6552  
\$1,726,449.07

Pierce Northeast  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
Commercial Construction, Inc.  
Schulz, Ron (402)370-3474  
\$251,251.51

N-121 to US-81  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Gdrl, Elec, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Lollman, Doug (402)370-3474  
\$2,081,952.79

## District 4

In Hebron  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Gdrl  
Castle Construction, Inc.  
Mead, Terry (402)371-6416  
\$868,251.82

Amherst South  
Br  
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries  
Harter, Lance (402)234-6456  
\$310,228.78

Gibbon Interchange  
Elec  
Ensley Electrical Services, Inc.  
Kleffner, Michael (308)385-6888  
\$98,174.35

Hazard East  
Culv  
The Diamond Engineering Co.  
Kleffner, Michael (308)385-6888  
\$73,413.17

Hastings - Doniphan (NB)  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Ruxton, Bob (402)462-1996  
\$1,557,363.08

Miller to Custer Co. Line  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Farber, Tom (308)865-5434  
\$2,669,487.27

Elm Creek South  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Fence, Elec, Sign  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Farber, Tom (308)865-5434  
\$7,497,827.44

District 4 - Districtwide  
Br, Gdrl  
Cement Products, Inc.  
Kwiatkowski, Rick (308)754-5411  
\$596,159.80

Silver Creek South Bridge  
Br  
Herbst Construction, Inc.  
Kwiatkowski, Rick (308)754-5411  
\$485,603.50

Stromsburg Southwest  
Br  
Wilke Contracting Corp.  
Grooms, Jerry (402)362-5934  
\$233,057.31

Stromsburg South  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Grooms, Jerry (402)362-5934  
\$2,192,382.23

York North & South Noise Wall  
Culv  
Garcia-Chicoine Enterprises, Inc.  
Anderson, Tom (402)362-5934  
\$546,504.20

York North & South  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Seed,  
Br, Gdrl, Elec  
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.  
& Affiliates  
Anderson, Tom (402)362-5934  
\$18,182,230.53

Hebron Vehicle Storage Addition  
Hebron Vehicle Storage Addition  
Caspers Construction Co.  
Sander, Gary (308)385-6265  
\$628,606.00

Doniphan North  
Gr, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Elec, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Weber, Kirk (308)385-6888  
\$2,456,679.21

Ravenna Viaduct  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Elec  
Christensen Bros., Inc.  
Weber, Kirk (308)385-6888  
\$4,212,903.12

Locust St. Intchg., Grand Island  
Landscaping  
Gross Seed Company, Inc.  
Schmidt, Larry (308)385-6888  
\$137,227.40

Grand Island South (So. Locust St.)  
Landscaping  
Gross Seed Company, Inc.  
Schmidt, Larry (308)385-6888  
\$75,151.50

Guide Rock North  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Meyer, Steve (402)462-1996  
\$3,698,927.08

## District 5

West Sidney Interchange  
Elec  
Watts Electric Company  
Frickey, Russ (308)262-1929  
\$104,149.60

Oshkosh Interchange  
Elec  
Watts Electric Company  
Frickey, Russ (308)262-1929  
\$95,442.90

Scottsbluff West  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Applegate, Joe (308)632-1429  
\$4,984,306.78

NE/SD Line South  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br  
Christensen Bros., Inc.  
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144  
\$2,207,229.65

Marsland South  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Perrett Construction, Ltd.  
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144  
\$4,448,654.86

Harrison West  
Specialty  
Ballou Construction Co., Inc.  
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144  
\$344,403.60

Harrison Maintenance Facility  
Harrison Maintenance Facility  
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries  
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144  
\$445,000.00

Harrison Salt Storage Facility  
Harrison Salt Storage Facility  
Paul Reed Constr. & Supply, Inc.  
Carnahan, Brian (308)432-6144  
\$57,880.00

Gering Maintenance Facility  
Maintenance Facility  
Heggen Construction, Inc.  
Rhamy, Wayne (308)632-1429  
\$4,294,341.46

Pine Bluffs, Bushnell &  
N-19 Bridges  
ConPav, Br, Gdrl  
Reiman Corp.  
Johnson, James (308)262-1929  
\$1,128,837.65

Jct N-71 West  
Specialty  
Monarch Oil, Inc.  
Johnson, James (308)262-1929  
\$937,069.36

Niobrara River South of Harrison  
Gr, Culv  
Paul Reed Constr. & Supply, Inc.  
Jacobs, Maryanne (308)632-1429  
\$413,692.05

## District 6

Overton Southeast  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries  
Raddatz, Bruce (308)995-6677  
\$240,938.72

Paxton Northwest  
Bit  
Western Engineering Co., Inc.  
Harter, Lance (402)234-6456  
\$897,911.07

In Westerville  
Br  
Wilke Contracting Corp.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$368,338.70

Callaway Southeast  
Gr, Br, Gdrl  
The Diamond Engineering Co.  
Lautenschlager, Chris (402)421-1717  
\$803,770.77

Mullen South  
Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Pettigrew, Don (402)376-3421  
\$2,045,603.44

Lexington Southwest  
Gr, Gdrl, Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Krajewski, Anthony (308)995-6677  
\$1,231,108.56

N-61/UPRR Lake McConaughy  
Gr, MSE Wall, ConPav, Culv,  
Br, Gdrl, Elec  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Morrell, Richard (308)535-8033  
\$5,684,098.81

Gothenburg  
Salt Dome & Conveyor System  
Dome Corp. of North America  
Morrell, Richard (308)535-8033  
\$647,965.00

Overton Link  
Gr, MSE Wall, Culv, Seed, Br,  
Gdrl, Elec, Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033  
\$6,365,563.52

Gothenburg South  
Gr, Seed, Gdrl, Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033  
\$3,846,973.25

Tri-County Canal East of No. Platte  
Specialty  
Ensley Electrical Services, Inc.  
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033  
\$404,460.00



Stapleton Maintenance Facility  
Stapleton Maintenance Facility  
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries  
Thomsen, Toby (308)535-8033  
\$1,085,000.00

Brady South  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Elec, Bit  
Capital Contractors, Inc.  
Brinker, Gary (308)535-8033  
\$9,965,526.75

Oconto South  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
White, Dennis (308)872-6735  
\$2,328,661.54

Broken Bow South  
Gr, Culv, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
White, Dennis (308)872-6735  
\$12,720,608.55

## District 7

In Holbrook  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Krajewski, Anthony (308)995-6677  
\$185,384.98

US-6 to Oxford  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Kuhn, Kenton (308)995-5397  
\$2,894,323.43

Cambridge - Holbrook  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Collins, Duane (308)345-8490  
\$5,195,002.27

Maywood  
Maywood Emergency Fire Repair  
McCook Contracting, LLC  
Ziebell, Roger (308)345-8490  
\$155,995.00

Imperial Equipment Storage Bldg.  
Imperial Equipment Storage Bldg.  
BD Construction, Inc./Kearney  
Ziebell, Roger (308)345-8490  
\$211,890.00

Grant Maintenance Facility  
Grant Maintenance Facility  
Simon Contractors & Subsidiaries  
Ziebell, Roger (308)345-8490  
\$303,100.00

In Holdrege  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Sell, Tim (308)995-5397  
\$774,288.77

Republican City - Naponee  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Sell, Tim (308)995-5397  
\$5,424,979.40

Holbrook to N-46  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Doyle, Kelly (308)345-8490  
\$7,343,552.73

N-46 to Holdrege  
Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Doyle, Kelly (308)345-8490  
\$4,986,708.26

## District 8

North Loup Br., Burwell  
Gr, ConPav, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Elec  
A & R Construction Co.  
Colfack, Gene (402)336-2051  
\$3,047,658.52

Burwell South  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Elec, Bit  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Colfack, Gene (402)336-2051  
\$1,646,946.31

Newport - O'Neill  
Gr, Culv, Seed, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Rau, Larry (402)387-2471  
\$10,490,764.49

Taylor Maintenance Facility  
Taylor Maintenance Facility  
Paulsen, Inc.  
Rudnick, Michael (402)387-2471  
\$1,045,500.00

Chambers Junction South  
Gr, Culv, Br, Gdrl, Bit  
Werner Construction, Inc.  
Ziska, Dan (402)336-2051  
\$5,490,549.91

### Key:

Aggregate - Agg  
Bituminous - Bit  
Bridge - Br  
Building - Bldg  
Concrete Pavement - ConPav  
Culverts - Culv  
Electrical - Elec  
Grading - Gr  
Guardrail - Gdrl  
Mechanically Stabilized Earth - MSE  
Seeding - Seed



**By Steve Duecker**  
Highway Environmental Biologist  
Planning & Project Development



# Photo Gallery

The Environmental Section is in the process of putting a photo gallery on our Web site of plants and animals that have been found on the NDOR's wetland banks and mitigation sites. These photos were taken over the course of the last 15 years. There will be photos of birds, forbs (flowering plants), grasses and grass-like plants, herps (reptiles & amphibians), insects, mammals and a miscellaneous category. Each species will have the common name and scientific name. A brief species description and location of photo will also be included. We are planning on having the first of these on NDOR's website this winter.

Many of the photos are specimen shots taken during monitoring of the sites with whatever light/weather conditions were at the time. Light conditions are always important in taking outdoor photos. Most important, though, is to have a camera with you. This prevents having to say, "Man, I wish I had my camera."

Morning and evening light provide the best light and generally it is not as windy. The wind is always a problem with plant photos. If the plant is moving in the wind a higher shutter speed will be needed. Shutter



speed is the quickness of the opening and closing of the aperture. The size of this opening can also be controlled. In most cases when you increase shutter speed you will lose focus depth (depth of field) on the subject. Only by shooting at various settings will you find the right combination.


Composition is also important; it is best not to bulls-eye the subject in the middle of the frame. Most photographers divide the frame into thirds and compose using these segments. If the subject is an animal try to have it looking into the frame, not out of it. With animals the eye is most important; make sure it is in focus.

I would recommend a couple of books on nature photography for detailed information: "Closeups in Nature" and "The Nature Photographers Complete Guide to Professional Field Techniques" by John Shaw. Both of these books are available in the library at NDOR's Central Headquarters.

**Remember: You have to be there to take the photo!**



# We Get Letters ...



October 16, 2006

Timothy Weander  
NDOR District 2 Engineer

Dear Mr. Weander,

In today's business climate it seems that compliance with rules and regulations is becoming an increasing part of business. More and more the reality of being an employer extends beyond securing and maintaining the resources required to provide a service or manufacture a product. Along with the ever present pressure of economic constraints, keeping up with federal, state and local requirements can be overwhelming for a small employer. In response to the immediate and urgent, details are often overlooked or even neglected. The result on the employer's side is added expense and frustration with the agencies charged with enforcement of the regulations.

This morning an employee with your agency responded to our aggravation with grace and professionalism. Connie Diblasi took an interest, initiated action, and provided a face to your agency. Her assistance with a situation resulting from our neglect was courteous and helpful, when it could have been demanding and dismissive. It is more often that we encounter employees that are uninformed, uninterested, or too busy to be bothered. We wanted to take a moment to let you know how much we appreciated her response and how helpful she was in helping us resolve the issue.

Thanks!

Nancy Fager  
Fager Excavating Co.

**The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.**

October 12, 2006



Tim Weander  
NDOR - District 2 Engineer

Dear Mr. Weander,

I'm sure that being part of state government, your office gets plenty of complaints from the public. However, I would like to commend and thank Connie in your office, Kevin in the Blair office, and Jill in Lincoln for their help in solving a problem.

I had been working with Kevin regarding rainwater running from the shoulder of Highway 75 down my driveway causing deep ruts and erosion of the rock. Kevin had rock dumped along the asphalt; however, it did not help since the water still ran parallel to the rock and down my driveway. I paid to get the driveway fixed; however, after more rain the problem continued. Kevin told me that he didn't know what else could be done to eliminate this problem.

I called Lincoln and spoke with Jill in Mr. Craig's office, who stated she would transfer me to Connie and was sure Connie could help me. Connie and I discussed the problem, and she said she would get back with me after checking with other individuals. I did call her back a few days later and she stated the only other option would be to grade down the shoulder of the road. She further explained that Kevin had other priorities but would get to my concern as quickly as he could. I stated I understood and that I appreciated her help.

That evening when I turned in my driveway, the grading of the shoulder had already been done. I'm hopeful that this will eliminate the problem.

Again, I would like to thank Jill and Connie for their help. They were friendly, courteous and willing to go the extra mile to help me. Also, I appreciate Kevin's help and quick response to grading of the shoulders next to my driveway.

Sincerely,

Valerie Toombs  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Editor's Note:** The helpful NDOR employees are Kevin Hindley, Hwy. Maintenance Supt. at District 2 in Blair; Connie Diblasi, Staff Assistant I at District 2 in Omaha; and Jill McAuliffe, Administrative Assistant at Central Headquarters in Lincoln.

Letters continued on next page



October 6, 2006

Roger Klasna  
NDOR - District 6

Dear Mr. Klasna,

On September 1, the State Patrol conducted a night-time vehicle safety check between the hours of 2300–0200. The vehicle check was conducted on the northbound traffic lane of Highway 83 at mile marker 85 north of the North Platte River bridge.

When contacted about assistance with this vehicle check, you and the Department of Roads employees were more than accommodating and helpful in providing equipment and manpower. The following persons helped set up the vehicle check and provided assistance during late hours and on a holiday weekend. Please extend my thanks to Kevin Petska, Duane Livingston, Gary Lopez, Jim Morphew, Robert Drake, James Bohlen and Rick Yonkers.

With your assistance, the vehicle check was a total success. There were no traffic accidents and everyone was safe at the conclusion of the vehicle check. Approximately 132 vehicles went through the check point. Law enforcement issued a total of 28 violations. The total included one drug arrest, one driving under the influence arrest, two open alcohol container arrests and one driving under suspension arrest.

On behalf of the Nebraska State Patrol, I want to extend a sincere "Thank You" to your agency and employees for their efforts and professionalism. With their help the streets were made much safer for all of the motoring public.

Sincerely,

Buck Boje, Sergeant  
Nebraska State Patrol - Troop D



September 11, 2006

NDOR - District 2

To Whom It May Concern,

Recently our Accelerated Senior Math class went on a field trip to view the Hooper East-West project. Mick Jacobs took time out of his busy schedule to explain the details and processes of the project. He also showed us around the job site. It was a very interesting, educational experience. Mr. Jacobs is an exceptional representative of the Nebraska Department of Roads. We are very grateful to have had this opportunity to learn more about the construction and engineering processes.

Sincerely,

Accelerated Senior Math class  
Oakland-Craig Public Schools

**Editor's Note:** Micky Jacobs is a Hwy. Project Manager in District 2 at Fremont.

## Recommended Reading

Another good book

as recommended by Director John Craig

"Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature and Climate Change" by Elizabeth Kolbert, 2006, 210 pages.

This is a sobering read. There seems little doubt that so-called global warming is occurring. In simplest terms the issue is one of heat transfer between air and land and water and what are the implications of that? Some of the reviewers have drawn the analogy of this book to that of *"Silent Spring"* by Rachel Carson, which was published in 1962. Carson, of course, was one of the first authors to raise the issue of

environmental pollution and degradation and, in no small measure, contributed to the nation's environmental consciousness and corresponding laws and programs. Each of us must draw our own conclusions from this book.





# NDOR Events Calendar

## — December —

### National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

- 6 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885
- 12 New Employee Orientation Program**  
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")  
Contact Carrie Williams @ 479-4870
- 13 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885
- 14 Letting**  
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact Liz Wunderlich @ 479-4528
- 15 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**  
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 15 Hwy. Commission Meeting**  
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530
- 21 Project Scheduling Meeting**  
8:30-11:30 a.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact Craig Anderson @ 479-4666
- 25 State Holiday – Christmas**

## — January —

- 1 State Holiday – New Year's Day**
- 9 New Employee Orientation Program**  
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")  
Contact Carrie Williams @ 479-4870
- 10 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885
- 15 State Holiday – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- 19 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**  
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 19 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**  
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436

- 24 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885
- 25 Letting**  
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact Liz Wunderlich @ 479-4528
- 26 Hwy. Commission Meeting**  
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530

## — February —

- 6 New Employee Orientation Program**  
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")  
Contact Carrie Williams @ 479-4870
- 14 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885
- 16 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**  
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium  
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 18-24 National Engineers Week**  
[www.eweek.org](http://www.eweek.org)
- 19 State Holiday – Presidents' Day**
- 23 Hwy. Commission Meeting**  
10:00 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Shirley Schafer @ 479-4530
- 23 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**  
10:00 a.m., NDOR Materials & Research Conference Room  
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 479-4436
- 28 RoadToasters**  
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.  
Contact Janice Kollars @ 479-4885

If you would like a key event included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication Office 479-4512 or e-mail [lwilson@dor.state.ne.us](mailto:lwilson@dor.state.ne.us). Information for the February/March Roadrunner should be received by January 15.